

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The office action of May 2, 2005 has been carefully reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-29 remain in this application.

Claims 1, 5-10, 13-16 and 19-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent no. 5,680,636, issued October 21, 1997, to Levine et al. ("Levine") in view of U.S. patent no. 6,687,878, filed March 15, 1999, to Eintracht et al. ("Eintracht") and claims 2-4, 11-12, 17-18 and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Levine and Eintracht and further in view of U.S. patent no. 6,320,577, filed November 3, 1998, to Alexander. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants are concurrently submitting a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 to antedate Eintracht. As evidenced by the declaration, applicants conceived and reduced to practice the invention of claims 1-29 prior to the earliest priority date of Eintracht, March 15, 1999. Accordingly, applicants submit that Eintracht does not qualify as prior art to the present invention. As such, each of the above rejections is rendered moot.

CONCLUSION

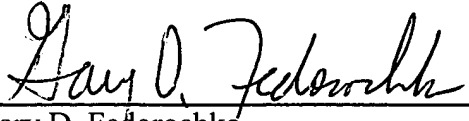
If any additional fees are required or if an overpayment is made, the Commissioner is authorized to debit or credit our Deposit Account No. 19-0733, accordingly.

All rejections having been addressed, applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully solicit prompt notification of the same.

Respectfully submitted,
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